

GIMME GOD!

Church Service Packet

Resurrection

John 11:17-27

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Welcome to the Gimme God! Worship Service. We have tried to make these resources as easy to use as possible. The sermons and prayers have been formatted with plenty of space to write in between the lines. Please feel free to make changes that will be most appropriate for your church.

To print the children's bulletin for ages 3 to 6, copy pages 20 and 21 onto sheets of 8.5 x 11 paper (double-sided) and fold. To print the children's bulletin for ages 7 to 12, copy pages 22 and 23 onto sheets of 8.5 x 11 paper (double-sided) and fold. **[Important Note: When printing children's bulletins, in the "Print" dialog box, please make sure you have the "Page Scaling" option set to NONE. Do not "fit" or "shrink" to fit the printable area. Feel free to contact us if you have problems printing.]**

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Sermon

In his book, *A Third Serving of Chicken Soup for the Soul*, Roger Thomas tells the story of a woman who had been diagnosed with cancer and had been given only three months to live. Her doctor told her to start making preparations to die. So she met with her pastor to discuss certain aspects of her funeral. She told him which songs she wanted sung at the service and which Bible verses she would like read.

Just as she was getting ready to leave the pastor's office, she turned around abruptly with an excited look on her face and said, "Oh, and there's one more thing."

"What's that?" he asked.

"This is very important," the woman continued, "I want to be buried with a fork in my right hand."

The pastor stood, staring at the woman, not knowing quite what to say.

"Is that okay? What's wrong?" the woman asked.

"Well, to be honest, I'm puzzled by your request," said the pastor.

The woman explained: "In all my years of attending church socials and functions where food was involved, my favorite part was when whoever was clearing away the dishes would lean over and say 'You can keep your fork.' It was my favorite part, because I knew something great was coming. When they told me to keep my fork, I knew that a dessert beyond my wildest imagination

was on the way! So, I just want people to see me there in that casket with a fork in my hand and I want them to wonder ‘What’s with the fork?’ Then I want you to tell them, ‘Something better is coming — so keep your fork, too.’”

This woman must have been familiar with the statement of Jesus in John, chapter 11: “I AM the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.” As many Christians do, she had the hope that someday soon, we will be resurrected to live in a better place, a perfect place, where we will be face to face with God Himself.

John caught a vision of this place in Revelation, chapter 21, and his description of heaven has become a favorite, comforting passage to those who are facing grief and loss in life. Listen to his words:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He

will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”¹

I Am

Especially in a world where we confront sorrow, suffering, and grief on a daily basis, we cling to these words. We cling to the hope of a better and brighter world someday. But that makes it all the more interesting that Jesus says I AM the resurrection and the life. He doesn't say I WILL BE the resurrection and the life. He doesn't say I WAS the resurrection and the life. He says I AM. Present tense. Right now. In this moment.

Realizing this can set us back on our heels for a moment. We are so used to thinking of the resurrection as a mysterious, physical, future event, but in John 11, Jesus is saying, “*Right now*, I am resurrection. I am life. In this moment. Not a thousand years from now. Not pie in the sky, by and by, but today. Right here. Right now.”

Peter writes about this in his first epistle, chapter 1, verses 3-4: “Because Jesus was raised from the dead, we’ve been given a brand-new life and have everything to live for, including a future in heaven—and the future starts now!”²

Eternal Life Starts Now

The future starts NOW! We don't have to wait for the true life that comes from God. We can live it right now. In fact, if you are connected to God, the Source of Life, you can consider today as just another day in your eternal life with Him. That's right. God says, "I am life." So if you have Him in your life, you *have* eternal life right now, even if you're living with a terminal illness.

In our reading for today, Jesus said "whoever lives and believes in me will *never* die." Right after He said that, He asked Martha, "Do you believe this?" And He's also asking you: Do you believe this? Do you believe that today is another day in your eternal life with Him? Do you believe that He is resurrection? Do you believe that He is life? Do you believe that He has the power to regenerate any places in you that are dead today?

He certainly *does* have that power. We see that in the story of Lazarus. In fact, the miracle of raising Lazarus was specifically designed to help us understand that God is not limited when it comes to bringing life out of dead places.

A Sick Friend

In the beginning of John, chapter 11, Jesus receives a message that His beloved friend, Lazarus, is very sick. But instead of going right away to heal him, Jesus stays put, right where He is, with the disciples. Then, two days later, Jesus suddenly announces that they are going back to Bethany, to

Lazarus's house. Jesus knows that Lazarus has died, and in verse 14, Jesus actually says to His disciples, "Lazarus is dead, and for your sake, *I am glad I was not there*, so that you may believe."

This seems a little out of character for Jesus, doesn't it? From the story of the healing of the centurion's servant, we know Jesus could have healed Lazarus just by thinking about it. But He didn't do that, and He didn't even start out for Bethany until Lazarus had *already* died. Plus, He tells His disciples that He's *glad* He wasn't there. Basically, He says He's glad Lazarus has died. That doesn't seem very compassionate.

Why Jesus Delayed

But Jesus delayed His trip to Bethany for a reason. By the time He shows up at Lazarus' house, Lazarus has been dead for four days. This timeline was significant, because the Jews believed that the spirit of the dead kept vigil by the tomb for three days, watching for a chance to come back into the body; but on the fourth day, when the disintegration of the body fully set in, the spirit would fly away.

So Jesus shows up on the fourth day to call Lazarus out of the tomb so that nobody would be able to say it *wasn't* a miracle. By the fourth day, everybody knew Lazarus was dead . . . his "spirit had flown away," according to their belief, and there was no chance that he was coming back. But what Jesus was about to reveal to Mary, Martha, and His disciples was that God is able to bring to life even those things that look the most hopeless.

It's incredible, isn't it?! When Jesus speaks and we hear Him, we can walk out of the dead places in our lives and walk straight into the newness of life. And this isn't something that happens 10, 50, or 1000 years down the road. It can happen today, right now.

Life and Death

Jesus once said, "I have come that you may have life, and have it to the full."³ When He said this, He was talking to people who were conscious and breathing. This is important to understand, because we mostly associate life and death with whether a person is breathing or not. If a person is breathing, we call them "alive." If a person has stopped breathing, we call them "dead."

But that isn't how God looks at life and death. Here's how God looks at life and death: If we refuse to have a relationship with God, if we reject His advances, if we cut ourselves off from Him, we are "dead," even if we're walking around talking. And the opposite is also true. If we love God, if we have invited Him to be the Lord of our lives, we are "alive," even if we've been buried for four days.

Sometimes it's hard to put life and death in this perspective. Especially when we've lost someone close to us, we can easily get overwhelmed with grief and sorrow. But God wants us to know that the greater tragedy is that we could walk around on this planet for 90 or 100 years and never truly *live*, never truly find the life that Jesus so desperately wants to give us. *That* is the true tragedy,

because—as He demonstrated by calling Lazarus out of the tomb—God is more than able to restore the breathing.

Really Believing It

Charles Templeton, co-founder of Youth for Christ International, once said, “Christianity does not remove you from the world and its problems; it makes you fit to live in it, triumphantly and usefully.”

That’s what Jesus is saying to us today. “He who believes in me will never die . . .” Do you believe this? Do you *really* believe it? If you do, if you know that there is no power on heaven or earth that can snatch you out of God’s hand, then let that empower you. Don’t let the world around you get you down . . . when things feel the worst, when they look like they couldn’t possibly get any better, remember that God is the resurrection and the life. In an instant, He can turn everything around.

So, where are you at today? What part of you is rotting away in a cold, dark cave? Do you think it has been too long? Do you feel like the “spirit has flown away” and there’s no chance of new life for you? Today, Jesus stands ready to roll the stone away, to pull back the curtain . . . He is the resurrection. He is the life. With three words, He brought out of the grave a man whose body had begun to deteriorate. How much more, then, is He able to speak new life into your heart and mind!

Live Today

Author Richard J. Needham once quipped about the six stages of life: Spills . . . Drills . . . Bills . . . Ills . . . Pills . . . Wills.

God wants to add a seventh: THRILLS.

And He doesn't just want this to come at the end when we all get to heaven. Yes, we can be buried with our forks, and we can know that we will soon live in a world without sin and suffering. But God wants us to also hang onto our forks in the here and now, for His new life begins *today* . . . even in the midst of death.

Jesus says, "I AM the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me *will never die* . . ."

Do you believe this?

-
1. Revelation 21:1-4, NIV
 2. 1 Peter 1:3-4, *The Message*
 3. See John 10:10

Prayers, Etc.

INVOCATION

Life-giving God, in You, there is no death. There is no night. There is no darkness. Enter this place. Enter the dank, dreary tombs of our lives and breathe new life into us. You alone have the power to awaken us to abundant life. Amen.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will never die.” Come, let us celebrate this wondrous God, who gave His life that we might find life. Oh come, let us worship and bow down!

PARTICIPATORY PRAYER *(may be spoken together with the congregation)*

Gracious Father, You are the Source of Life. You create and sustain our lives, our planet, and the entire universe. You never stop giving to all of Your creation. Blessed Jesus, You are the resurrection. You have the power to heal and restore. You touch the dead areas of our hearts, awakening us to a fresh, new life. Holy Spirit, You move around us, in us, and through us, empowering us to walk in eternal paths. You are one God: totally united in love, mercy, and truth. Open our eyes to see You today and open our hearts to receive Your abundant life. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S GRACE *(may be spoken by pastor after the Participatory Prayer)*

God sees the dead places in your life. He knows the darkness and evil that infect your heart. And He is not scared away by any of it. On the contrary, as we meet with Him, His glorious presence will cleanse and transform our hearts and minds. Rest in Him, now, and let Him do His good work in you. Amen.

CALL FOR THE OFFERING

God is life. We live and move and breathe in Him. We are dependent on Him for everything we need. As He provides for us out of the abundance of His heart, may we open our hearts to pour out gifts and blessings for others. And let us not today give only our money, but may we also re-dedicate our time and our talents to His service. Today's offering is for . . . *(omit if your offering is not specially designated)*

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Father of life, today we return these gifts to You. Along with our money, we ask that You also take us and use all we have for the benefit of Your creation. Thank You for being an awesome Giver. Amen.

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

Living Lord, we bow before Your throne today, our hearts full of awe for everything You are. You are gracious and merciful. You are slow to anger. You abound in compassion. You open up Your hand and feed the hungry. You are generous beyond belief. You are goodness personified. The more intimately we know You, the more beautiful You become.

You are everything that is lovely. You are everything that is worthy. Now and for all eternity, You have the name that is above all names. You have the power that is above all powers. Your truth will never be defeated, unseated, or overthrown. Your love is everlasting and Your faithfulness endures for all generations.

You have not kept a record of our wrongdoing. But You *have* kept a record of our tears. You know every grief. You know every ache. You know every sorrow. You are intimately familiar with every pain. Thank You for hearing us even before we speak. **[insert the specific needs of your congregation here]**

All of these things we commit into Your hands, Lord, trusting in Your love and mercy through our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

BENEDICTION

And now, may our Great God—the One who declared that *He is* the resurrection and the life—call you forth from your tomb. May He search out every dead spot in your life and awaken your heart to His real and everlasting life, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Children's Story

Method: Story/Conversation

Purpose: To help children understand how God looks at life and death.

Good morning, boys and girls. Today, I'm going to tell you a story about Jesus and His friends. Jesus had three very good friends who lived in Bethany. He went to their house whenever He could, because He enjoyed talking to them and spending time with them. Their names were Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Have you heard about them before?

Well, one day, while Jesus and His disciples were far away from Lazarus' house, someone came and told Jesus that Lazarus—His dear friend—was very sick. And if Jesus didn't come and make him better, then Lazarus would die.

Have you ever had a friend or a family member who got very sick? It isn't nice when someone we love is sick. We want to help them, don't we?

Let's pretend that you had all the power to be able to do *anything* you wanted. If someone you loved got very sick and knew that they were going to die if you didn't help them, what would you do? *[Allow children time to answer.]*

If it was me, I would heal them! Now, have you heard stories of how Jesus healed people? Was He able to heal Lazarus? Yes.

Did Jesus heal Lazarus? No. Jesus *didn't* heal Lazarus, and Lazarus died. Mary and Martha, his sisters, were *so* sad that Jesus didn't come to heal their brother. But, do you know what Jesus said to His disciples?

While they were on the way to Lazarus' house, Jesus said, "Lazarus has died, and for your sakes, I'm *glad* I wasn't there!" Can you imagine Jesus saying something like that?! That seems pretty rude, doesn't it?

But, boys and girls, here's the important point. *God* doesn't look at life and death the way *we* look at life and death. Jesus said He was glad that Lazarus hadn't been healed because, now . . . what was Jesus about to do? Do you remember what happened when Jesus went to Lazarus' funeral? [*Allow children time to answer.*]

He raised Lazarus from the dead! Jesus proved to everyone that God doesn't just have the power to heal a disease. He has the power to bring dead people back to life! Wow!

Boys and girls, God looks at life and death *very* differently than we do. In fact, before Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He said this to his sister, Martha: "I am the life . . . He who believes in me *will never die.*"

What about you, boys and girls? Do *you* believe in Jesus? Then Jesus says you will never die. That's because, with just a word, God is able to bring us out of the grave—just like He brought Lazarus out of the grave.

There is only one thing God *cannot* do. Do you know what that is? [*Allow children time to think and answer.*]

The only thing God *cannot* do is make me decide to love Him. The only thing God *cannot* do is make you decide to love Him. We have to make that decision all on our own. And Jesus said that anybody who has made that decision to love God and believe in Him will never die.

So, boys and girls, I want you to remember that even when sad things happen in life—like when someone we love gets sick or dies—God sees things in a whole different way, and He is able to turn things that look very bad into things that are very good.

Responsive Reading

God, You formed us from the dust of the ground and breathed into us the breath of life.
Your holy, almighty Spirit brings us alive.

Night as we know it is not night to You,
and death as we know it is not death to You.

Whoever believes in You will never die,
and whoever accepts You will live, even if he dies.

Sin has tried to pay its wages in death,
but Your gift is eternal life, and all that will have You will have *it*, too.

God, You formed us from the dust and breathed life into us.
Breathe in us once again, and bring us alive to You!

Hymn

You Are the Resurrection

sung to the tune of *Lead On, O King Eternal* (Lancashire)

alternate tunes: *O Jesus, I Have Promised* (Angel's Story), *The Church Has One Foundation* (Aurelia)

You are the resurrection! In You, we find relief
From all our troubling sorrows, from worry and from grief.
You are the life eternal. You are the second birth.
No one can take us from You, in heaven or on earth.

You find us in the darkness, in deepest, blackest night,
And suddenly we're bathed in Your resurrection light;
And now we have assurance, as night turns into dawn,
That when our breathing ceases, Your life continues on.

Eternal life is in You! We know it starts today!
Your Word produces healing where once there was decay.
Oh, may we live this day in the fullness of Your grace
Until we dwell forever with You, Lord, face to face!

Words by Kelley Lorencin

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Song Suggestions

Hymns

God will take care of you

Words and music by Civilla D. Martin and W. Stillman Martin

I'm going home

Words and music by William Hunter and William Miller

Marching to Zion

Words and music by Isaac Watts and Robert Lowry

Praise Songs

God is good all the time

Words and music by Don Moen and Paul Overstreet

© 1995 Integrity's Hosanna! Music

He knows my name

Words and music by Tommy Walker

© 1996 Doulos Publishing

I give You my heart

Words and music by Reuben Morgan

© 1995 Hillsong Publishing

I lay it down

Words and music by Don Harris and Gary Sadler

© 2002 Integrity's Hosanna! Music

I need You more

Words and music by Lindell Cooley and Bruce Haynes

© 1996 Integrity's Hosanna! Music

Jesus raised one of His friends to life.

Match the puzzle shapes to find out
who Jesus brought back to life.

A

S

A

L

U

Z

R

L A Z R U S A

Wee Worship

ages 3 to 6

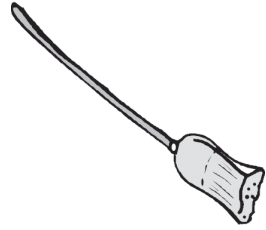
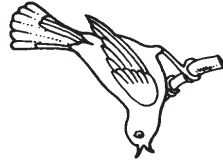
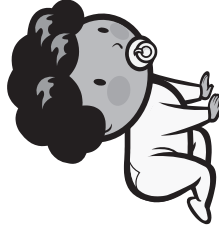
John 11:17-27



The Resurrection and the Life

Jesus said, "I am the life."

Circle the things that are alive.



Jesus told Martha that He was the life.

Then, Jesus asked Martha a question.
Trace the letters to find out what He asked her.

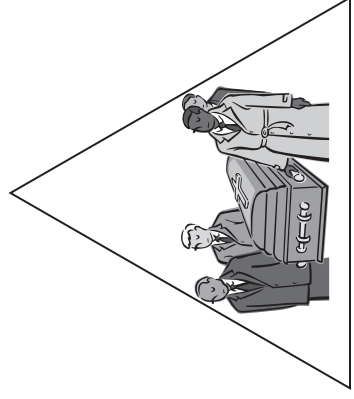
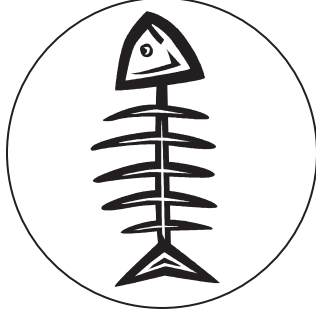
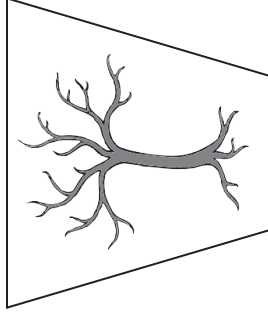
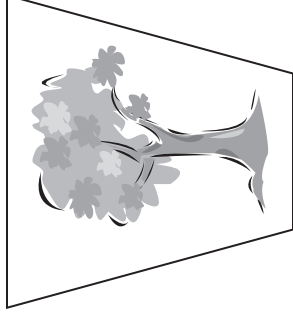
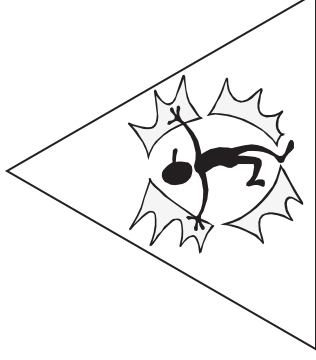
Do you
believe
this?

How many words?

2 3 4

Jesus makes dead things come to life.

Match the dead object with the living object.





Believing in Jesus gives us life.

Use the code below and put the correct letters into the blanks to find out what Jesus said about believing in Him.

A=B	B=C	C=D	D=E	E=F	F=G	G=H	H=I
I=J	J=K	K=L	L=M	M=N	N=O	O=P	P=Q
Q=R	R=S	S=T	T=U	U=V	V=W	W=X	X=Y
Y=Z	Z=A						

“ _____
G D V G N A D K H D U D R

H M L D V H K K K H U D

D U D M S G N T F G G D
_____, _____
C H D R Z M C

V G N D U D Q K H U D R

Z M C A D K H D U D R H M

L D V H K K M D U D Q
_____, _____
C H D



iWorship

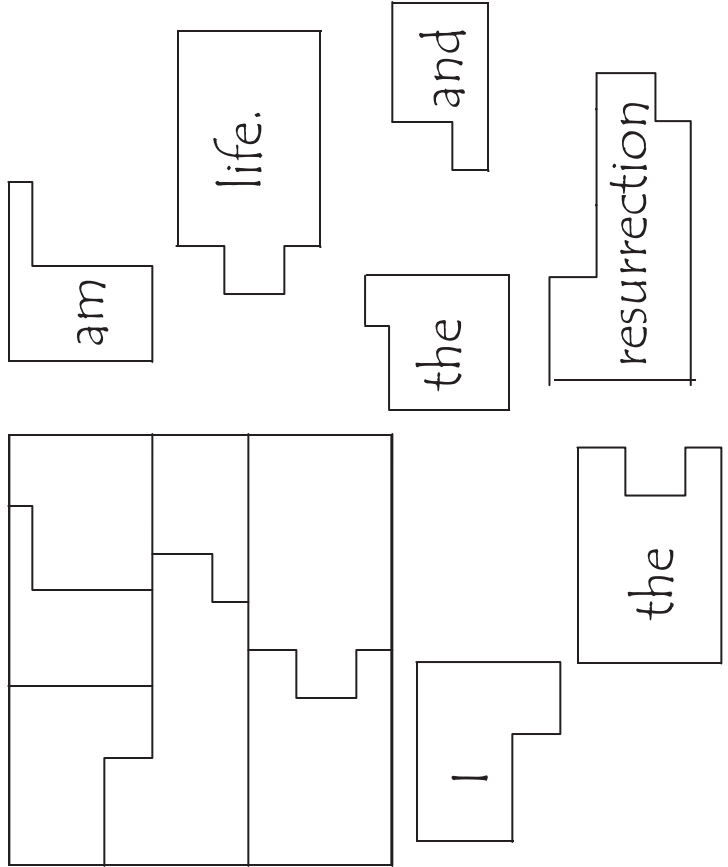
ages 7 to 12

John 11:17-27

The Resurrection and the Life

Jesus can resurrect us to new life.

Fit the puzzle pieces together to find out what Jesus said.



Jesus came so we could have eternal life.

Find the word in each set that doesn't belong.
Write in on the line below.

1
Light
World
Dark

2
House
Car
Believes

3
Condemn
Blue
Red

4
Coat
Perish
Glove

5
Begotten
Chocolate
Vanilla

6
Cat
Save
Dog

For God so loved the _____¹ that He gave

His only _____² Son, that whoever

_____³ in Him will not _____⁴ but have eternal

life. For God did not send His Son into the world to

_____⁵ the world, but to _____⁶ the world

through Him.” —John 3:16-17

Jesus has a life-giving presence.

Write a word for each definition.
Then transfer the letters to the lines.

What dogs wag: _____
1 2 3 4

What you drink: _____
5 2 1 6 7

What you eat: _____
8 9 9 10

A male sibling: _____
11 7 9 1 12 6 7

“ _____ N M _____
5 12 6 2 7 1 12 2 12 6 2 7 10

_____ J _____ S _____
1 12 2 1 6 5 2

C _____ M _____ N G, S _____ N _____ U _____
9 3 12 6 5 6 1 9 9 1

_____ M _____ M. _____
1 9 6 6 1 12 3 4 9 7 10

M _____ S _____ Y _____
2 7 1 12 2 2 3 10 3 8 9

_____ N _____ M Y _____
12 2 10 11 6 6 12 6 7 6

_____ U _____
11 7 9 1 12 6 7 5 9 4 10

N _____ V _____
9 1 12 2 6 10 3 6 10